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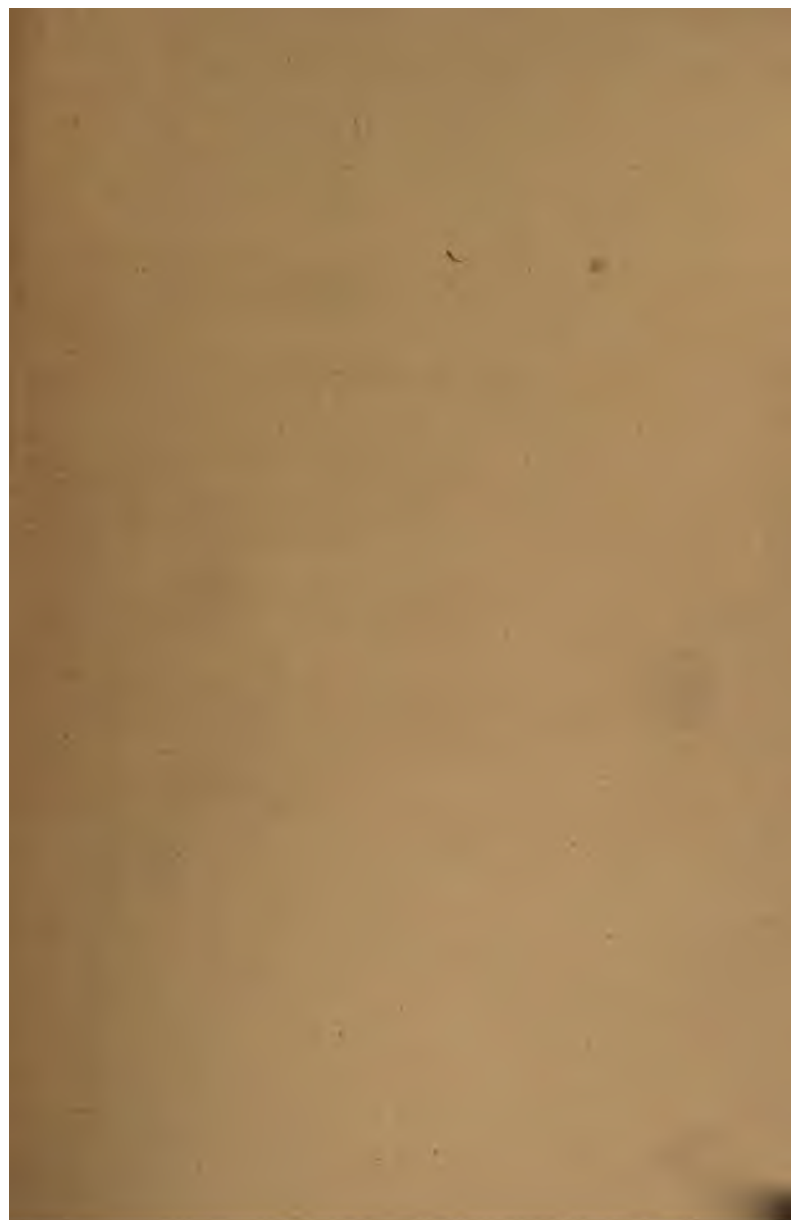
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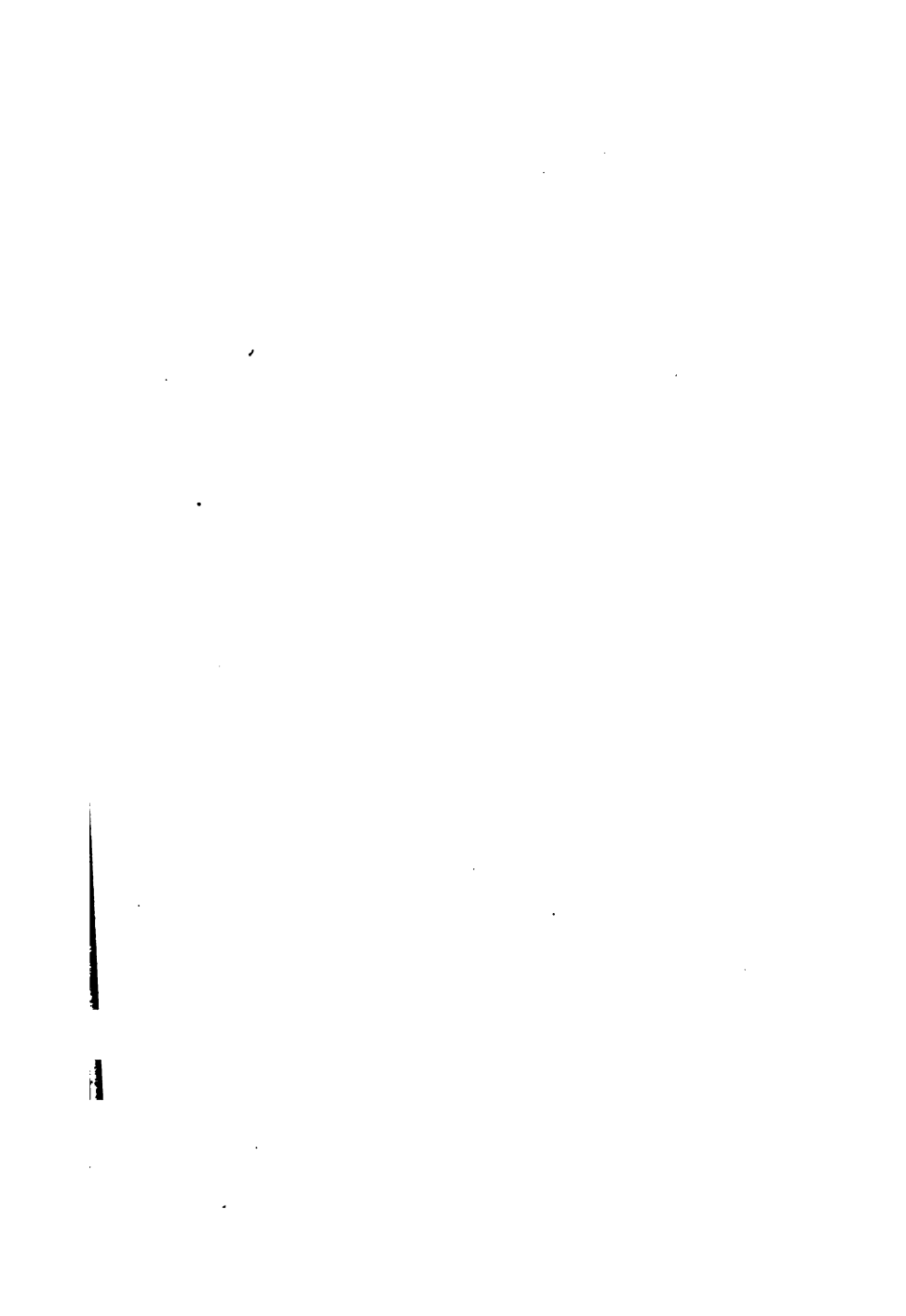
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*W. Blum.*

# THE HUMAN FOOT

A FEW PRACTICAL WORDS ON THE COVER-  
ING AND PROTECTING OF IT

Lane Library

BY

WILLIAM BENEKE



NEW YORK CITY  
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

1888

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## PREFACE.

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Many books have been written on the subject of feet and footwear, but most of them being theoretical, are of little practical value to the general public ; and after reading the scientific phrases, people are generally none the wiser. The writer having had many years of practical experience in the boot and shoe manufacturing business, and having made the foot and its proper treatment a special study, will give his readers the result of his experience, in the hope that people may profit by it and devote more care and attention to their downtrodden servitors than heretofore.

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## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
ART OF COVERING AND PROTECTING THE FOOT .	9
THE CARE OF THE FEET . . . . .	17
MATERIALS USED FOR FOOTWEAR . . . .	24
HOW SHOES ARE MADE . . . . .	30
THE BUYING OF SHOES . . . . .	42
A WORD TO PARENTS . . . . .	55
UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS . . . . .	57
COMMENTS FROM THE PRESS . . . . .	66
SOME GENERAL HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS . .	73



# THE HUMAN FOOT.

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## I.

### THE ART OF COVERING AND PROTECTING IT.

“Boots and shoes are made to order” can be read on numerous signs all over town. Boots and shoes are made to order, but how many are made to fit? The art of fitting feet is one of the most difficult, and is mastered by very few.

The painter, whose productions please the eye, is courted and his name is engraved into the annals of history, while the writer, whose works please the imagination, and the actor, who gives pleasure to the spectators, are also honored. Still people cannot enjoy looking at paintings or reading books or enjoy any pleas-



and hardest worked of any. What I am about to remark applies largely to the gentler sex, but I will confine myself to men. It is an everyday occurrence to see gentlemen with stylish silk hats costing from \$5.00 to \$8.00, wearing machine-made shoes costing from \$2.00 to \$3.00, with soles and heels worn down and crooked, limping along in a most pitiable and ungraceful manner.

Having had occasion to examine hundreds of thousands of feet within the past twelve years, the writer has found that 990 out of a thousand feet are more or less deformed, and that these deformities are caused by wearing ill-fitting shoes, and principally by wearing short shoes.

When the mother buys the first pair of shoes for her babe she will invariably take good care that the shoes are short enough and not leave any space between the end of the toes and the forward outer line of the shoe. This practice is kept up until

the boy is entrusted with the selection of his own shoes, when he will follow the notions of his parent and will select footwear much shorter than it should be.

By the continued wearing of short shoes the toes are forced back and the joint of the great toe, and eventually the other toes, become distorted and bulge out on the side and top,\* thereby forming bunions, corns, ingrowing toe nails, and laying the foundation for other diseases of the feet and body. Young men, and for that matter, older men, will force their feet into the smallest possible shoes, imagining that this will improve the appearance of their feet. No illusion could be more ridiculous or unfortunate.

Accounts of how Chinese women of rank pinch their feet into iron forms are read with a shock. The habit is deemed barbarous and pitiful; still it is imitated in the most surprising manner by those who

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\*An illustration of this is given in the last pages of this book.

may perhaps be most shocked by the revelation.

If men realized how vain and silly they appear in tight shoes, even in the eyes of the wiser element of the gentler sex, they would undoubtedly abandon their unhealthful and unprofitable habit. What looks more genteel and sensible than wearing shoes long enough and wide enough? Could anything more forcibly indicate a level head and the reverse of self conceit?

Good judges of such matters are well aware that large feet, as a rule, indicate good business ability, integrity, perseverance and other good qualities. Give me a man with big feet to deal with. A large firm foot may indeed serve as a recommendation.

People ought to spend more money and care on their pedestals. I venture to say that one-half, nay, three-quarters, of all the ailments of the mind, body and

pocket arise from neglected feet and ill-fitting footwear. Is it possible for a man to properly transact business, or follow whatever calling he has, if his feet ache or his shoes pinch? A man ought to treat and cover his feet so that he never needs to think of them while following his calling, but to give all his thoughts to his calling, and he will make the price of a pair of good shoes in a week, nay, in an hour, sometimes in a minute.

Thus the care of the feet affects not only the health but the prosperity of the race. It is, in fact, an aphorism of the physician that to be healthy a man must be unconscious of his body. Man first discovered the locality of his stomach when its workings became deranged. When feet are in a condition of perfect health their owner should be unconscious of them; and he cannot be unconscious of them if they are ill-clothed.

The exercise of a little thought in ad-



vance will avoid ills that call useful thought away from the necessary meditations of life. "I cannot go any farther, my feet ache me so," will be heard very often. If your feet did not ache you, and you were able to go farther, would you not be able to do more work and earn more money? Often enough in an hour to buy a new pair of good shoes.

Have you any pleasure anywhere if your feet ache you? "I have a cold and do not know where I got it" is often heard. People are warmly dressed, have not exposed the upper parts of their bodies, so where does the cold come from? They try to pack more clothes on them, but do not consider that their cold arises from their feet, which are not sufficiently protected against chill or dampness. People pay large sums of money for doctors' bills annually but are loth to expend a five dollar bill for a good pair of shoes.

## II.

### THE CARE OF THE FEET.

\* A few hints as to the treatment of the feet may save money and distress to thousands of my readers.

In the first place discard your shoes if they distress you in the least, as quickly as you can; give them to a poor man who wears worse shoes than yours, or get rid of them somehow as soon as possible. Buy a pair of well made hand-sewed shoes, not too large, nor too small, but large enough to wear them from the beginning with comfort.

Do not take tight shoes on the theory that they will stretch; they will not stretch if properly made. Take them wide enough and by *all means see that they are three-quarters of an inch longer than your feet,*

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*since in walking the foot gradually works forward and will fill up the space in front.* Be particular about this.

A good many who wear good fitting shoes have been troubled with aching feet, and are at a loss to account for the trouble. The writer was among those who suffered this unpleasant experience. Always wearing perfect-fitting shoes his feet were at times so sore and swelled that he was often compelled to actually desist from transacting business. He wore blue and brown merino socks of the best quality, costing \$10 per dozen. Reading in a paper that certain dyes were injurious, he thought of his socks in connection with his sore feet. He began to wear white cotton socks and never had sore feet again. Never wear colored socks if afflicted with sore feet, but white, unbleached or light gray socks, nothing darker ; and change them at least twice or thrice a week if not oftener, and your feet will not be sore from that cause.

Now, to consider a very important feature of the treatment of feet ; that is, cleanliness. What I am about to remark applies to those who do not bathe regularly. People wash their hands and face several times a day, but deem their poor downtrodden feet of too little importance to demand so much attention. Why not spend five minutes every day grooming those poor faithful servitors? Or if five minutes a day is considered too much time wasted, why not devote that time every other day? Bathe your feet every night before going to bed in warm water, using good soap. If you cannot do that every night, do it every other night ; but by all means bathe your feet twice a week. The feet are, in fact, a delicate structure, a marvel of anatomical intricacy, full of susceptible nerves and sinews. Being incased in leather boots and not being exposed to the air as the hands and face are, renders them sensitive and tender.



I would, therefore, not advise bathing them in cold water, as that would have a tendency to chill the nerves and render them stiff. Use warm water, as warm as the feet will bear. This will not only relieve them from all soreness, but will in a good many cases build up the most deformed and tender feet, if assisted by proper footwear. If warm foot baths are not practicable, then sponge your feet mornings after rising with bay rum or alcohol, and then rub with a coarse towel. The latter treatment is an excellent measure for strengthening the nerves of the feet and in fact of the whole body.

Wear shoes of medium weight, with stout single soles, in summer. They will be more serviceable and protect your feet better against heat and dust than light weight shoes.

Heavy double soled shoes ought to be worn in winter.

Rubber sandals that merely cover the sole and toes may be worn in wet weather. Overshoes that encase the whole foot are not advisable. They often cause headache and sickness at the stomach, while their removal and the exposure of the feet to the air often causes serious colds.

Do not wear woolen or partly woolen socks, as they will retain the perspiration of your feet and keep the latter moist and cold; but wear cotton socks all year around, light ones in summer, stout ones in winter. Do not wear machine-made shoes, which are merely made for sale, serve as coverings, but give the wearer the reverse of comfort, and with their pasteboard inner soles will keep the feet moist and cold. Do not, indeed, wear any other but solid leather hand-made shoes of medium or first-class quality, as your purse will allow.

Slippers or cloth shoes may be worn evenings while resting, but a practice

ought not to be made of wearing them all day or part of the day, as is so often done, since it will make feet tender and sore. Leather is the natural covering of feet and good fitting leather gaiters ought to be worn while people are on their feet. If afflicted with corns, seek a good chiropodist and have the offenders trimmed or extracted. There is no permanent cure for corns. They have to be attended to as your nails or beard. Gentlemen pay on an average twenty-five cents per week to the barber for shaving and cutting hair, thereby looking to the improvement of their personal appearance. Why not pay a shilling a month to a chiropodist and procure comfort for your feet ?

Abraham Lincoln, who had large and powerful hands and feet, used to create amusement among those who met him intimately by his habit of slipping off his shoes whenever the opportunity occurred. He called it "letting his feet breathe."

There was as much sense as humor in the idea, though I am inclined to think that if old Abe had worn shoes that fitted him properly he might have been less discomforted by his feet.

### III.

#### MATERIALS USED FOR FOOTWEAR.

Perhaps it may interest the reader to know something of the materials employed in the making of boots and shoes, and of the manner in which they are made.

The materials employed in the making of low grade machine-made shoes are of an inferior quality, comprising split, buff, grain leather, and all sorts of skins more noted for their smooth and glossy appearance than for serviceability or practical value. For the inner soles all manner of patent pasteboard or compressed leathers are used. The outer soles are mostly made from hemlock leather. These goods are promiscuously manufactured in the West, and shipped over the country—a snare for the unwary. The best shoes in the States

are manufactured in and around New York City, and these will cope with shoes made anywhere in the world.

Various materials are used for men's hand-sewed footwear, but the only rust-worthy species of leather are good calf and kip skins, cordovan, English grain leather and porpoise skins, and for the sole part, good oak or union tanned sole leather. People imagine that calf skins should always be light, but there are light, medium and stout calf skins, according to the age of the calf from which they are taken. Very light skins are from very young animals, and cannot possess much strength or durability. Medium skins are more serviceable and are to be recommended for moderate as well as for warm weather, as they will give better protection against cool or damp weather, as well as against the heat of summer, and from an economical standpoint are more to be desired since they will wear longer.

Stout calf or kip skin shoes should be worn during the winter months. Fancy leathers, such as patent, enamel, goat, kid, or whatever their style or origin, are better adapted for dress or fancy purposes than for practical service.

Very light soles will do very well for the house, or for dancing, but for street wear stout soles are preferable, as they offer a better protection against rough roads as well as against dampness and cold. In summer the heat of the flag stones will be less liable to penetrate stout than thin soles. Double soles should be worn in winter.

Up to a comparatively recent date the manufacture of shoe leather in this country remained in its infancy. Calf and kid skins and other leather had to be imported and a big harvest was reaped by the importers. But within the last decade things have changed. Enterprising firms have made an effort to do as well as their

French and German brethren abroad, and have succeeded in producing such fine skins that the foreign skins are being driven out of the market. Firms like Chas. Hauselt and Barnet Brothers, employing thousands of skilled workmen, have driven the Chas. Simons, Grissons and other French and German tanners, who for years monopolized our markets, out of the country; and the time is not far distant when American productions alone will be employed in the manufacture of shoes for our markets.

Foreign calf skins have an advantage over the home product in their pliability, but for durability the American product is equal to that furnished by any tanner abroad, and is often preferable to anything that is brought across the Atlantic. Calf or other skins used either for the upper or sole part of shoes, may well be compared with beef, since there is a porterhouse, sirloin and round steak in



beef, and, in the same manner, there are choice and less choice cuts in skins. After skins are cut up, they are sorted and assigned for use in the making of various grades of shoes. One calf skin will serve for two and a half or three pairs of shoes. The price of French and German calf skins varies from 80 cents to \$1.75 per pound. American tanned calf skins cost from 50 cents to \$1.20 per pound. Good American calf skins are preferable to the cheaper or medium French grades. People imagine that light weight shoes are the most costly; but as calf skins as well as sole leather is sold by the pound, it follows that light weight shoes are the least expensive to manufacturers.

Patent and enamel leathers are made both at home and abroad, but the European products still remain superior to the domestic. The latter are used for cheap shoes, pumps and slippers, while the former are sold for fine shoes.

Kangaroo skins, calf-kid, horsehide and all leather used for the upper or top part of men's shoes are produced here in grades far superior to the foreign product, and very little of the latter finds its way into our country. Glazed kids, used for ladies' shoes, which until within a few years had to be imported, is now manufactured in superior qualities in New York State, almost equal to the imported article, and is now almost exclusively used for ladies' shoes. The time is not far distant when Americans will wear exclusively shoes made of American skins by American workmen, and our people should regard the fact with much satisfaction and pride.

Sole leather is tanned better here than abroad, and is very largely exported to various parts of the world. Very little or none is imported. Makers abroad charge extra for American soles.

#### IV.

#### HOW SHOES ARE MADE.

As a matter of fact there are not shoemakers enough in the world to supply one hundredth part of the shoe-wearing population with hand-made shoes. A good workman can make but one pair of shoes by hand in a day, while machines produce a thousand pair in the same space of time. Consequently most shoes are made by machinery, and only people living in large cities are able to buy hand-made shoes at reasonable prices.

The machines constructed to make shoes are a marvel of ingenuity, and many pages would be required to fully describe them. Suffice it to say that shoes are lasted, sewed, nailed, trimmed, heeled, burnished and finished by machines con-

structed for that purpose. Most ingenious of all the machines is one that imitates the characteristics of a hand-sewed shoe, the shoes made from which are called "hand-sewed welt shoes," but which are merely an imitation apt to deceive the buyer. People should not be led by the name, "hand-made welt," into the belief that these shoes are sewed by hand.

Sts. Crispin and Crispianus, two pious Italian monks and philanthropists living in the third century, are said to have been the first makers of shoes by hand, and since their day all followers of the shoe-making craft have been called Knights of St. Crispin. Before their day, history tells us, only sandals were worn.

A king, so goes the tale, living in days when shoes were unknown, one day stubbed the royal toe, and in his angry pain cursed the rough earth. The king's curse was heard by a follower of St. Crispin. "Sire," quoth he, with the voice of inspi-

ration, "only place your foot upon this rule and in twelve hours I will cover the earth with leather." Within the given time the cobbler brought to the wondering king a pair of shoes, and in a trice the roughest path was carpeted with leather, and the cobbler was rewarded with the Chairmanship of the Senate Committee to look into the charter of the road upon which the king's toe was stubbed.

Now, this was a long time ago, and the episode might have been forgotten were it not for the fact that the very roughness which the ancient cobbler overcame is re-appearing in the nineteenth century in spite of St. Crispin's invention. Alas! for tender-footed humanity! Shoemakers make rough walking nowadays, and the seams and tensions in our modern cheap footwear tempt the wearer to curse—not the earth, but the shoemaker. And yet the latter is not altogether to blame for these ills. So long as people persist in



buying cheap shoes, shoes will be made cheap and imperfect, and so long as people will persist in wearing shoes that are too small for them they will have to suffer the unpleasant consequences.

A shoe seems a small matter in the concerns of this world, and yet how important and essential to the health and happiness of the race ! How much genuine peace and contentment lies in a perfect-fitting shoe, and what misery in a shoe that is ill-made and ill-fitting !

Making shoes by hand is tedious work. When the maker has the materials required for a pair of shoes, he will first dampen the leather needed for the soles or bottom part of the shoes, sharpen his knives, make his wax end, and then begin by attaching to the last the inner sole, consisting of a medium weight cutting of oak tanned leather. This is done with two nails or pegs, one at the heel and the other at the toe part of the shoe. He will

then trim the inner sole to the shape of the last. Then the upper is drawn tightly over the last by the aid of a pair of pinchers made for the purpose, and the stretch taken out of the leather. The latter process is very important, as well lasted shoes will keep their shape until worn out, while poorly lasted shoes, such as those made by machines, will lose their shape in a short time. Now the welt is prepared, and when it is ready to be sewed on the maker goes to work with awl and wax, accompanying every stitch with a monotonous chant. Then the outer soles are tacked to the last, after they have been hammered to make them hard. The knife is brought into play in trimming the sole to its proper shape; and then the outer sole is sewed to the welt with wax and thread. Now comes the building of the heels; soles and heels are trimmed again, then blackened with ink, and burnished with hot irons so as to

produce a gloss. The shoe is now ready for inspection.

It does not take long to describe the process, yet, as I have said, it takes a good workman a full day of twelve hours to produce a pair of shoes, and most workmen will turn out not more than four or five pair in a week.

Within the last fifteen years a new system has been introduced in the making of hand-sewed shoes. This is called the team system, and consists in ten men working together, one doing the lasting, and others sewing, stitching, rounding, trimming, etc., each man working at the one branch assigned to him. By this method a greater uniformity in the appearance and shape of shoes is realized; and each man working at his specialty becomes expert in that particular branch, and better results are often obtained by the team system of making shoes than otherwise. Still the finest work is done by



benchmen, that is, men that make shoes throughout.

The best shoes in the world are made in New York City. English shoes are noted for their durability and clumsiness, the French for lightness and pliability, but the most perfect footwear for style, fit, workmanship and durability, is produced in our great metropolis. And why not? Have we not the choicest materials of the world at our command? And are not our workmen without superiors?

Every business man is liable to think his occupation the most trying. But from long personal observation I should say that the custom shoe business is more trying than any other, and rewarded with the least appreciation. Factory shoes are made mechanically. There is a system for cutting clothing, and if they do not fit they can be altered. But a new system has to be invented for every pair of shoes made to order, as not two pair of feet in a thousand

are alike. A good many things must combine to make a shoe fit. The measure must be correctly taken ; the uppers must be cut properly and in accordance with the measure ; the lasts must be fitted up and padded with leather until they have taken as nearly as possible the exact form of the patient's foot. These three branches have to be attended to by experts in the profession. Then the uppers, lasts, and materials for the bottom part are handed to the maker. If the latter stretches the calf skin too much, the shoe will be too tight ; if he does not use sufficient energy, they will be too loose ; if he doesn't mold the soles properly, or arranges them either a trifle too narrow or too wide, the shoe will not fit. Should he graze the upper leather with his knife while trimming the soles, or bring the uppers in contact with a hot iron while burnishing the lower part, they are liable to break and thus be ruined.

From this the reader will perceive how

much care has to be exercised in the making of custom shoes ; and if shoes thus made do not turn out as they might, the customer may, perhaps, be more ready to yield indulgence after knowing the exactions and difficulties of the making.

To those who may wish to procure hand-made shoes ready made a hint will be given later on. To those having much deformed feet and requiring made-to-order shoes, I would say, go to a good house and to men who endeavor to understand their customers (as Beneke Bros., of 199 and 201 Canal street). If the shoes are ready for your inspection examine them carefully as to proper fit. Observe first whether they are long enough. Shoes, when they are first tried on, should appear three-quarters of an inch—or better, a full inch—longer than the foot. Be very particular about this, and do not accept the shoes should they appear too short. Suit yourself

about the fit as to width. Some feet will stand more pressure than others ; but the wise will not object to shoes being a trifle easy.

Some makers have a pet last, well adapted, perhaps, for perfectly formed feet ; and they try to adapt that last to all feet. With the same right your tailor might cut a pattern for a perfectly formed figure, and then insist upon using that pattern for every customer that came along. Feet are to be fitted as they are and not as they ought to be. Care is to be taken to relieve deformities, and if it is not too late the feet may be restored by careful fitting to a healthy condition.

Some makers charge as high as \$12 and \$16 for gaiters, claiming that their productions are made of superior materials. The fact is that the best French calf skin does not vary much in price, and that every good custom maker selects the brand which he thinks will render the most service, re-

gardless of a variation of a few cents in price. No calf gaiter made to order is worth more than \$8, including a good fit and best materials, and leaving a fair margin for the maker. Patent leather, enamel, porpoise, or cordovan shoes are a little more expensive. Some houses make very good and serviceable calf gaiters to order at \$5, \$6 and \$7, as Beneke Bros. of Canal street.

It may not be out of place to say here, that the looked-down-upon craft of shoemaking has produced more illustrious personages than any other craft known to me. I have met in everyday business life a great many successful, esteemed and wealthy men who began life on the bench and then drifted into other channels more remunerative. If we look into history we shall find a number of bright lights and illustrious personages who began their career at shoemaking and whom the world has since delighted to honor. There was

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Sir Cloudesley, the cobbler's boy who became an Admiral ; James Slackington, the shoemaking bookseller ; Samuel Bradburn, the shoemaker who became President of the Wesleyan Conference ; William Gifford, who arose from the shoemaker's stool to the editorial chair ; Robert Bloomfield, the shoemaker who wrote "The Farmer's Boy" ; Samuel Drew, the metaphysical shoemaker ; William Carey, the shoemaker who translated the Bible into Bengalese and Hindostani ; John Pounds, the philanthropic shoemaker ; Thomas Cooper, the self-educated shoemaker who reared his own monument ; Hans Sachs, the "nightingale of the Reformation" ; Francesco Brizzio, the artist ; Rudolph de Jong, the portrait painter ; George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends ; Count Tolstoi, the Russian novelist, who cobbles his own shoes as well as those of his farm hands ; and in our own land, Noah Webster, the Apostle of Peace ; Roger Sher-

man, the patriot; Henry Wilson, the Natick Cobbler; and John Greenleaf Whittier, the "Quaker Poet," one of the most beloved of his countrymen.



## V.

### THE BUYING OF SHOES.

If the kind reader, having followed me thus far, will perhaps follow me through another short chapter, he may derive more material benefit from these last words of advice, than from anything that has already been said. Selfishness, we are told, is at the bottom of all our actions, and the writer is undoubtedly not exempt from the imputation. However, as he would wish to combine with his personal interests a desire to benefit others, the writer may expect some leniency.

I have indicated the proper treatment of the feet, and have given a general idea of the method of making footwear and the materials employed. The question will



naturally follow, "where are good, properly made shoes to be procured?" This question I will endeavor to answer.

Only a shoe! How small a matter, and yet how important! What a world of happiness lies in a perfect-fitting shoe and what a world of misery in an ill-fitting one?

Canal street is a thoroughfare eminently identified with the furniture trade. The most extensive furniture and upholstering houses in the States, and, indeed, in the world, are located upon this historic commercial avenue. Right in the heart of the street, midway between Broadway and the Bowery, and on the corner of Mulberry street, is a five story building, painted red, and covered with black and gold signs. In this edifice is manufactured and sold at retail the Beneke Shoe. No furnace smoke rises from the building, and there is no rattling of machinery, for the hundreds of expert workmen employed by the firm are

engaged in the manufacture of shoes by hand—shoes worn by all classes throughout the States.

Eleven years ago the Beneke Bros. embarked in the shoe business, with the intention of making and selling hand-made footwear exclusively. At that time hand-made shoes were high in price, and only the well-to-do could afford to wear them, or people who thought enough of their feet to sacrifice other comforts of life for the sake of properly covering their feet. In March, 1877, the "Beneke Shoe" was born; and the public was informed that these shoes were made after the old and only trustworthy method—that is, wholly by hand, and without the aid of any machinery whatever; that they were sewed with the lock stitch, and waxed flax thread, the awl being the tool, and strong arms the only mechanism; that these shoes would be sold at \$3.50, \$4 and \$5 per pair, and made to order at a proportionately

low figure. This left to the enterprising firm but a small margin on their products, but they figured on large sales, and their expectations were verified. In the beginning people looked upon their enterprise with some distrust, as they could not realize how hand-made shoes could be sold at such low figures. But after a time the public found that such was the fact, and from that time the success of the firm was acknowledged, and soon became phenomenal. Beginning with a mere handful of workmen, the firm at the end of but six months employed fifty experienced workmen; their factory and sales-rooms became too small to meet the increased demands, and they had to extend their quarters, until now they occupy the whole of the five-story buildings at Nos. 199 and 201 Canal street, devoting a space of 10,000 square feet to the manufacture and sale of hand-made footwear.

Two qualities have combined to make

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the Beneke Shoe popular : its remarkable easiness and perfection of fit, and its admirable durability. To render a shoe durable three qualities are essential—good material, good making, and a good fit. Even if the best materials are used and the shoe is not properly made, it will not wear well ; and if the fit is not correct the wider part will cause a friction with the narrower part, and the leather will wear and crack. Of course there is a limit to the wearing capacity of a shoe, since it is only made of animal tissue called leather, which is of itself perishable. Then the care and general treatment a shoe receives has to be considered. Some people very quickly wear away the sole leather ; others are more severe on the uppers. Some people walk with an easy gait, while others have more or less spring or bend in their feet while walking. The former will wear shoes longer than the latter. Some people take good care of their footwear ;

others neglect and abuse their shoes, taking no precaution against the injury and waste of the leather.

The Beneke establishment to-day is the largest of its kind in the world, and is an admirable example of business principles as applied with progressive ideas and sincerity of purpose. A large force of workmen in and out of the establishment is constantly employed in maintaining the superb stock of Beneke Shoes that are the foundation of the firm's remarkable success. It is the one house in the great metropolis that has made a specialty of manufacturing and selling hand-sewed shoes exclusively, and the only house that makes all kinds of hand-sewed footwear from the daintiest dress gaiters to the brawniest of top boots.

The writer is at the head of the concern, and now, as at the beginning of the enterprise, devotes his entire time and energy to the business. The same principles that

governed the house when it was founded, are applied to the management of the business to-day. The ablest workmen in the country are employed by the firm, and a careful and accurate system is observed in the conduct of the business to its smallest details. You may come to order patent leather riding boots, or to have a patch attached to a gaping gaiter—your wants will be attended to by pleasant-mannered salesmen, without regard to the extent of the order.

Beneke Bros. make all grades of hand-sewed shoes, and their trade is not confined to any one class of people. Anyone having \$3.50 to invest may indulge in the luxury of hand-made shoes. At the same time the firm is prepared to fulfil the most exacting demands that may be made upon the resources of their establishment. They have special workmen for the lower as well for the medium and higher grades. The shoes made to sell at \$3.50, \$4, \$5,

and \$6 a pair are good enough for anybody—made of the very best American tanned calf skins and sole leather, and capable of wearing even better than the high grades. The latter are made of the choicest imported materials, and are sold at \$7 a pair. Better shoes, as regards material, fit and finish, are not produced in this or any other country.

People dealing with us will have little difficulty in fitting their feet out of our large and varied stock. We always have many thousands of shoes, of all grades, styles, prices and dimensions to choose from, and the customer may readily fit his foot and suit his taste, without going to the trouble and expense of ordering. Buyers will be assisted in obtaining a proper fit by competent and polite salesmen, superintended by one of the firm. The prices are stamped on the soles of all shoes so as to avoid mistakes. There is but one price for each article in stock, and people

YMAA: IMAI



may suit themselves about the extent of the expenditure.

Years ago people were compelled to order shoes, which necessarily involved a loss of time, some vexation and often disappointment. To-day the majority prefer to examine shoes, and to suit themselves as to the fit, material and weight before buying, so long as they know that the shoes are fully as good as the ordered article. But some people have abnormal feet, and such require to have their shoes made to order. To those we will say that we keep the most experienced men in the profession to attend to their wants, and fit their feet properly. We guarantee a perfect fit in every case where the measure is taken by one of our men, and will ask our patrons not to accept shoes if they do not fit properly. It would not be either to our credit or interest to give people ill-fitting shoes. We prefer to place shoes that do not fit a certain customer in the general



ready-made stock and make a new pair in their place.

We make a specialty of athletic shoes, and have supplied all the great pedestrians, boxers, runners, base ball players and other sportsmen throughout the country, with shoes made specially for their purpose. A good many who had failed before have won their laurels shod with the Beneke Shoe, and therefore call it the "lucky shoe." We wish luck to all who wear our shoes; but we are inclined to think that in these cases "luck" consisted in wearing shoes properly made and fitted for the occasion.

Boots are not now worn to a great extent, yet we make a great many to order for street wear, for coachmen and jockeys, for riding and for hunting purposes.

Patent leather will crack, but by selecting the very best material, and having a new process of making these shoes we reduce that danger to the minimum.

The writer has worn a pair of patent leather shoes, made after our new process, for two summers, has had the soles renewed four times, and found them the most serviceable shoes he ever wore, and the most economical, as they saved him the time and expenditure involved in having them blackened seven times a week as calf shoes would require. Patent leather shoes are usually worn in summer or for evening wear, but our shoes may be worn during the wet season and in winter, as patent leather is positively waterproof.

Oil ought not to be used in cleaning patent leather shoes as it will soften the enamel and cause it to peel off. Water and a soft piece of cotton or linen cloth are the only requirements for cleaning and polishing patent leather. Vaseline pomade will prevent it from cracking.

People who have suffered the shortening of one leg by reason of hip disease, fracture, or other cause, require anatomical

shoes with cork soles. Many do not know where to go for such shoes. The making of this kind of shoe is a very difficult branch of shoemaking, the difficulty being not merely to make these shoes of the proper height but to have their appearance as tasteful as possible. We have had considerable experience in this branch of the business, employing special men for anatomical and all sorts of odd shoes.

Our lasts are of great variety both in shape and style, are built on scientific principles, and padded with leather so as to take as nearly as possible the various shapes of the feet to be fitted. The shoes we carry in stock are made by the same men, of the same materials and on the same lasts as the ordered work.

## VI.

### A WORD TO PARENTS.

Be careful about selecting footwear for your boys. The tender bones in a boy's foot are more apt to be deformed and perverted from their natural shape by wearing ill-fitting shoes than those of grown people. It is well, therefore, to select shoes long and wide enough for them, so as to give the boy's feet a chance to develop in proportion to the rest of his body. A graceful walk, good temper and more attention to studies will be the results.

We make shoes for boys which we think are perfect as to fit, and more durable than any other shoes we have ever seen. If you come for your own shoes, bring your boys

along. We will properly fit them and make them happy. Boys' calf button and laced shoes, sizes 2 to 4, we sell at \$3 a pair ; some of finer calf and genuine kangaroo skins, at \$3.50 and \$4. They will be cheaper in the end than machine-made shoes, and will give the boys more comfort. Remember one thing *All shoes we sell are strictly hand-made, without the aid of any machinery whatever.*

## VII.

### UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS.

Beneke Bros. have received from their thousands of customers many unsolicited testimonials in which they are justified, like all successful business men, in taking a high degree of professional pride. Hundreds of times they have received grateful acknowledgments from gratified customers by word of mouth. This enthusiastic commendation of the good work accomplished by this firm has, indeed, been an incident of their daily business. From the written words of some of the many customers who have expressed themselves with regard to the Beneke shoes it may not be out of place to make a few extracts.

One customer writes :

“I cannot wear shoes from any other maker. Please have one pair made for me as soon as possible, style, price and material the same as those you made for me a year ago.

S. EISENBERG.

“1412 Rock street, Little Rock, Ark.”

“As long as I live,” writes Dr. J. C. Parsons, of Savannah, Ga., “and have \$8, and you are in business, I expect to patronize you, as your shoes cannot be beat by anyone.”

It is with particular pleasure that the following enthusiastic letter is printed :

MESSRS. BENEKE BROS :

*Gentlemen*—My feet are very tender. I have tried shoemakers of all nations on both sides of the Atlantic, but found no comfort in any of their productions and suffered so much that I became a chronic limper. Since wearing your shoes I am a changed man, walking is a pleasure to me now, and since wearing the lucky “Beneke shoe” my fortunes have doubled. Hope

you will be able to supply me with shoes as long as I live. Very truly yours,

M. S. BARNET.

27 Spruce street, N. Y. City.

J. M. Moore writes from the office of the *Shoe and Leather Review*, Boston, that the shoes received by him from the Beneke Bros. were found to be a perfect fit, "and yet as easy as a pair that had been worn for months." He adds: "You may consider me a standing and walking advertisement for the Beneke Bros."

A gentleman writing from Savannah to a friend in New York and asking him to get for him a pair of shoes from Beneke Bros., adds: "I have a bet that they will make me a better shoe for \$7 than I can get in Savannah for \$10."

Letters come from all parts of the country:

GRASS VALLEY, CAL., Oct. 22, 1887.

BENEKE BROS.:

*Dear Sirs*—About March, 1886, you made for me a pair of sewed shoes, at a cost, I



believe, of \$6.50. They have out-worn anything on the shoe line that I ever had. I left my measure with you and I now write to ask if you still have it. I want two pairs of shoes and want you to make them and send them to me by mail.

WAGNER BRADFORD.

Mr. E. L. Wisewell, of Naples, Ontario County, N. Y., says: "We find the shoes highly satisfactory and feel that it is due to you to say as much. They are indeed a soft and comfortable pair, and just what was wanted."

The reputation of Beneke Bros. among the athletic and sporting fraternities is one of the best evidences of the firm's success in the manufacture of perfect fitting and permanently comfortable shoes. The most famous runners, boxers and athletes in general have worn shoes made by Beneke Bros., and they have unanimously praised the excellence of this footwear.

The most famous American boxer thus writes:

MESSRS. BENEKE BROS.:

*Dear Sirs*—I am pleased to congratulate you on the result you have attained in the manufacture of shoes for athletes. Those you have furnished me for wear in my boxing contests have given every satisfaction.

Very truly yours,

JOHN L. SULLIVAN.

A letter from the English champion of 1884 reads :

MESSRS. BENEKE BROS.:

*Dear Sirs*—The new boxing shoes received from you are undoubtedly the best I have ever seen. The workmanship, fit, etc., is perfect ; they are easy and comfortable and in every way superior to any made in England.

Yours truly,

ALBERT GREENFIELD,

Champion of England.

James Mace, the retired champion of the world, in a letter from Baltimore, says :

Your sparring and fighting shoes are superior to any shoes I had before. Slade liked his very much and declared that they

are perfect. Please preserve measures for future use.

Yours truly,  
JAMES MACE.

The modern champion sends the following hearty and unequivocal letter :

GLEN MITCHELL, SARATOGA, N. Y.,  
May 4th, 1883.

To Messrs. BENEKE BROS.,  
Shoemakers, cor. Canal and Mulberry Sts.,  
New York city.

*Dear Sirs*—It is only a matter of justice to your well-known firm, for me to thank you for the elegant and neat fitting elastic sparring shoes you made for me for my coming contest with John L. Sullivan, of Boston, Mass., at Madison Square Garden, New York city, on May 14. In sparring matches, as in pedestrian contests, light fitting shoes are very essential, in order to brace yourself firmly to the floor. The shoes you made for me and my friend William Madden, are superior to anything of the kind I ever wore, and I must say that you are the champion in making boxing shoes, and my friends will vouch for

the accuracy of my statements by sending their orders to you. Yours truly,

CHARLES MITCHELL,  
Champion pugilist of England.

John Hughes, the champion pedestrian of 1883, sent this enthusiastic letter to Beneke Bros. shortly after his famous race :

NEW YORK, June 12, 1883.

MESSRS. BENEKE BROS.

*Gentlemen*—Of all the champion pedestrians I think I am blessed with the most tender feet, as anybody having witnessed my struggles on the sawdust arena must have noticed. On some occasions I have suffered beyond endurance, at one time wearing off all my toe-nails, so that they dropped off at the close of the race.

I tried all the shoemakers in New York City making a specialty of pedestrian shoes, but was obliged to cut every shoe in order to make walking endurable, but suffered continued pain while on the track. At last, however, while training for the race in Baltimore, beginning May 28, 1883,

I heard several athletes and pedestrians talking highly of your shoes, and so I called at your place and ordered one pair of your light weight running shoes, and a pair of trotting shoes. The former I have worn all through the race, running with perfect ease 553 miles, and my feet were at the close of the race in such excellent condition that I offered to cover another 500 miles the following week for a wager of \$1,000, without finding a taker. My friend Mackey being poorly shoed, I gave him the trotting shoes you made for me, and he won the six days' race which took place in Baltimore the following week, and he said your shoes done him excellent service. No shoemaker save you will ever make running shoes for me again and I only regret not having known you at the beginning of my pedestrian career, as it would have saved me a world of agony and disappointment. Yours truly,

JOHN HUGHES.

Champion Pedestrian.

The following letter from the plucky champion Fitzgerald offers splendid testi-

mony to the character of the Beneke sporting shoes :

RAVENSWOOD, L. I., Nov. 2, 1882.  
MESSRS. BENEKE BROS.,  
201 Canal street, New York.

*Dear Sir*—During the six days' race of the champions, which recently took place at Madison Square Garden, and in which I defeated the champion long distance pedestrians of both hemispheres, I wore your light-weight running shoes, and am happy to state that they gave me more comfort than any shoes I wore before. My feet were in as good a condition at the close of the race as at the beginning, free from blisters or soreness of any kind.

Yours truly,

PATRICK FITZGERALD,  
Champion Long Distance Pedestrian of  
the World.

## VIII.

### COMMENTS FROM THE PRESS.

*From the New York WORLD, Nov. 9, 1884.*

[*Extract from article on famous metropolitan merchant.*]

Mr. Beneke is an industrious and conscientious worker, and all who come in contact with him become infected with the same good qualities. Mr. Beneke's name for good material at fair prices has made him very popular.

*From the New York WORLD, June 12, 1884.*

I have always felt sorry for those who suffer from uncomfortable shoes, yet no one need bear such an affliction if one will only exercise a little care in buying shoes. You can get easy fitting shoes with as little trouble as those society things which

give you so much pain. My feet are always at their ease, and why should they not be ?—for Beneke Bros., of Nos. 199 and 201 Canal street, make my shoes and I defy any shoemaker in New York to fit one better than they. SOL PRINGLE.

*From the New York TIMES, Nov. 9, 1887.*

In this age of machine-made everything, from houses to toothpicks, an establishment of any great size where shoemaking is still carried on by hand on a large scale is a thing of considerable novelty. It would be a never-ending source of delight to John Ruskin, or any other advocate of a man's doing his work with hands to know that such a novelty does exist in the city of New York. Beneke Bros., a firm that for twelve years has been doing business at 199 and 201 Canal street, on the corner of Mulberry street, is just such a concern. So wide a reputation have the Beneke Bros. gained that orders from individuals come pouring in from every State and city in the Union.



*From the SPORTSMAN.*

There is no house in the city that offers better goods than the now famous firm of Beneke Bros.

*From the EVENING SUN.*

Miss Fanny Mills, the Bowery giantess, who wore a No. 34 shoe, and the Midget Bros., who boxed in one of the Bowery museums, and who wore a No. 1, all got their shoes from the firm of Beneke Bros., at 199 and 201 Canal street. (After speaking of the famous sporting men who have worn the Beneke shoes, the article continues :) A farmer can get a rough and ready hand-made boot at a lower price than anywhere else in the city. The millionaire can pay \$8 for a pair of shoes that will surpass in excellence any \$16 shoe in the city.

*From the New York PRESS.*

The largest store in America where hand-made shoes are exclusively sold. The Beneke shoe has made for the firm a very

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high reputation. The fact that all their goods are made by hand, and that they carry at all times a very large stock, makes their store a favorite one for the people who desire to have hand-sewed work and at the same time be saved the delay and annoyance of ordering and waiting.

*From the New York WORLD.*

There is no place in this city where one can find better or more durable shoes and at lower prices than at this popular store. The Beneke shoe has no superior for durability, style and finish.

*From the New York TIMES.*

In the selection and purchase of materials the Beneke Bros. have no superiors, and they give to the business their personal attention.

*From the POLICE GAZETTE.*

The fighting shoes which Kilrain, the champion of the world, will wear in the coming international battle with Jem

Smith for the POLICE GAZETTE diamond belt, were finished by Beneke Bros. on September 20, and forwarded to the American champion, who is now in London, England. Of all the ornamental shoes ever worn by athletes, pugilists, or men of any profession, the champion's fighting shoes excel anything of the kind ever made, and reflect great credit on the firm.

*From TURF, FIELD AND FARM.*

Beneke Bros. make shoes of the best material and sell cheaper than any other manufacturers. Next to a midnight visit to the press room of a great daily paper, a half-hour spent at the Messrs. Beneke's establishment is worth a trip to the metropolis.

*From the New York TIMES.*

Shoes bought of Beneke Bros. carry their stamp with them, which is a guarantee of perfect fit and durability. Their charges are often below wholesale prices and their shoes are of a superior grade.

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*From the New York NEWS (in 1884).*

There is no doubt but that in a short time this will be the leading shoe house in America, if not in the world.

*From the New York MAIL AND EXPRESS.*

One of this firm's specialties is fitting "difficult feet." This process becomes in their hands not a difficult feat, but a "joy forever," and the boot or shoe remains a "thing of beauty" until it is worn out.

*From the NEW YORK NEWS.*

Whoever wants a boot or shoe that will defy snow or slush had better take a look at Beneke Bros.' goods.

*From BOOTS AND SHOES.*

William Beneke thinks that shoes are indicative of nationality and character. He makes footgear for a great many sporting and professional men, and gives it as his experience that sports are nearly always favored by nature with large and irregu-

lar feet. Brain workers, on the other hand, usually leave measurements for small, neat and regular footgear. The same may be said of actors. Business men's feet, on the other hand, seem to run to generous proportions.

Mr. Beneke thus characterizes the extremities of some of the nationalities : Germans have a large flat foot ; Irish a high instep and a generally stout foot ; Spaniards and Cubans have small finely shaped feet, while Americans born have the best all-around pedals of all nations. It is a theory of Mr. Beneke's, based on a good deal of observation, that worn-out shoes may be collected and arranged according to their peculiarities, by which it would be found that the wearers had been quite accurately classified as to their mental characteristics. He particularly emphasizes the fact that most people want shoes shorter than the length of their feet demands.

## IX.

### SOME GENERAL HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

Most shoes are made to please the eye, and without proper regard to the far more important qualities which a shoe should possess. How great a mistake this is we have already attempted to show.

\* \* \*

Some makers use lasts that are admirable in their artistic proportions and would fit perfect feet. The object of a wise maker should be to fit feet as they are, and not as they should be. When it comes to the solid comfort of the shoe the happy wearer will care very little whether the last upon which his comfortable shoe was made had a fancy name or not.

The phrase "hand-sewed welt shoes" has deceived a great many people. It has led many to believe that shoes so advertised are sewed by hand, when the fact is nothing of the kind, for these shoes are made by machines, the same as all other machine-made shoes and there is no hand-sewing about them. The name seems to be devised for the purpose of deceiving people.

\* \* \*

If properly shod, deformed feet will gradually be brought to their proper shape. The height of the shoemaking art is to make a shoe that will accomplish this result without discomfort to the foot in the interval. As we have already said, nothing can be done by making the ideal shoe in the first place. The foot must first be rendered comfortable.

\* \* \*

People may be judged from their clothes as to their taste and means, or by their

features as to their intelligence. From their shoes one may read a person's character, sometimes with great exactness. Careless people wear shoes trodden down on one side, often not blackened or polished, sometimes too large and ill-shaped. Vain people wear short shoes or shoes too narrow, and not corresponding with the shape of their feet—or with their calling and station in life. If such people are nervous and ill-tempered, the fact is more often attributable to the irritation caused by their footwear than to their natural disposition. Men of sound judgment and rational habits will wear shoes of generous proportions, and in sympathy with the shape of their feet.

\* \* \*

Shoes will wear longer if well treated. Keep them clean ; have the heels repaired whenever they wear down at the sides. Oil the leather with pure neatsfoot or castor oil once a month (a very slight ap-



plication will suffice), and they will wear one-third longer than if abused. Generous applications of neatsfoot oil once a month, especially on the soles, and where the uppers join the sole leather (around the stitches), will render shoes waterproof in winter.

\* \* \*

Wear light colored—or, what is better—white cotton socks Summer and Winter; bathe your feet regularly in hot water, with soap, or sponge with bay rum. Keep the nails of your feet well trimmed ; attend to the corns—and wear hand-sewed shoes.

\* \* \*

It is very important for the comfort of your feet to have good fitting socks. Ill-fitting socks will wrinkle and irritate the foot; rather wear socks a trifle small than too large. If you will tell your furnisher what size shoes you wear, he will advise you as to the size of your socks. Do not buy cheap socks or socks

with seams. The best socks are the cheapest in the end, as they will wear so much longer, not speaking of the comfort they will give you.

\* \* \*

Chiropodists are plentiful. Corns want to be attended to as well as your beard. A few shillings a month expended in that direction will give you a few dollars' worth of comfort.

\* \* \*

Do not wear fancy shoes. A gaudy shoe is not only itself in bad taste, but at once suggests the idea of its being machine-made. There is sufficient room for the exercise of personal preference in the choice of buttoned, laced or congress shoes. Fancy cutting or stitching is not desirable.

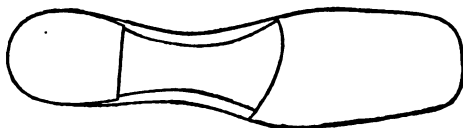
\* \* \*

Breaking in new shoes rivals the agony of a toothache. People wearing the Beneke shoe do not suffer that torture.



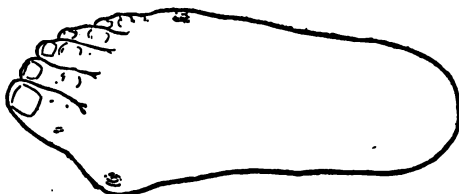


**OUTLINE OF A CHILD'S FOOT, ILLUSTRATING THE  
PERFECT SHAPE.**



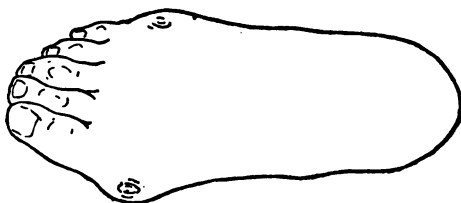
**FORM OF SHOE THAT WILL PRESERVE THE PERFECT  
SHAPE.**





EFFECT OF WEARING MACHINE-MADE SHOES TOO  
SHORT AND TOO NARROW AT THE TOES.

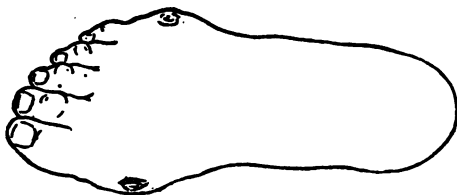
*Beneke Brothers. Measure No. 3804.*



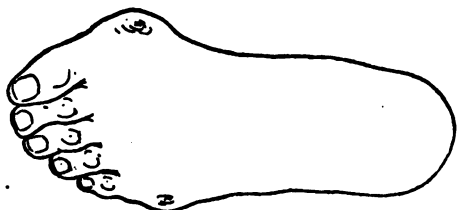
ULTIMATE EFFECT OF PERSISTENTLY WEARING  
SHORT SHOES.

*Beneke Brothers. Measure No. 3867.*





**RIGHT FOOT.**



**LEFT FOOT.**

**EFFECT OF PERSISTENTLY WEARING ILL-  
FITTING SHOES.**

*Beneke Brothers. Measure No. 8992.*



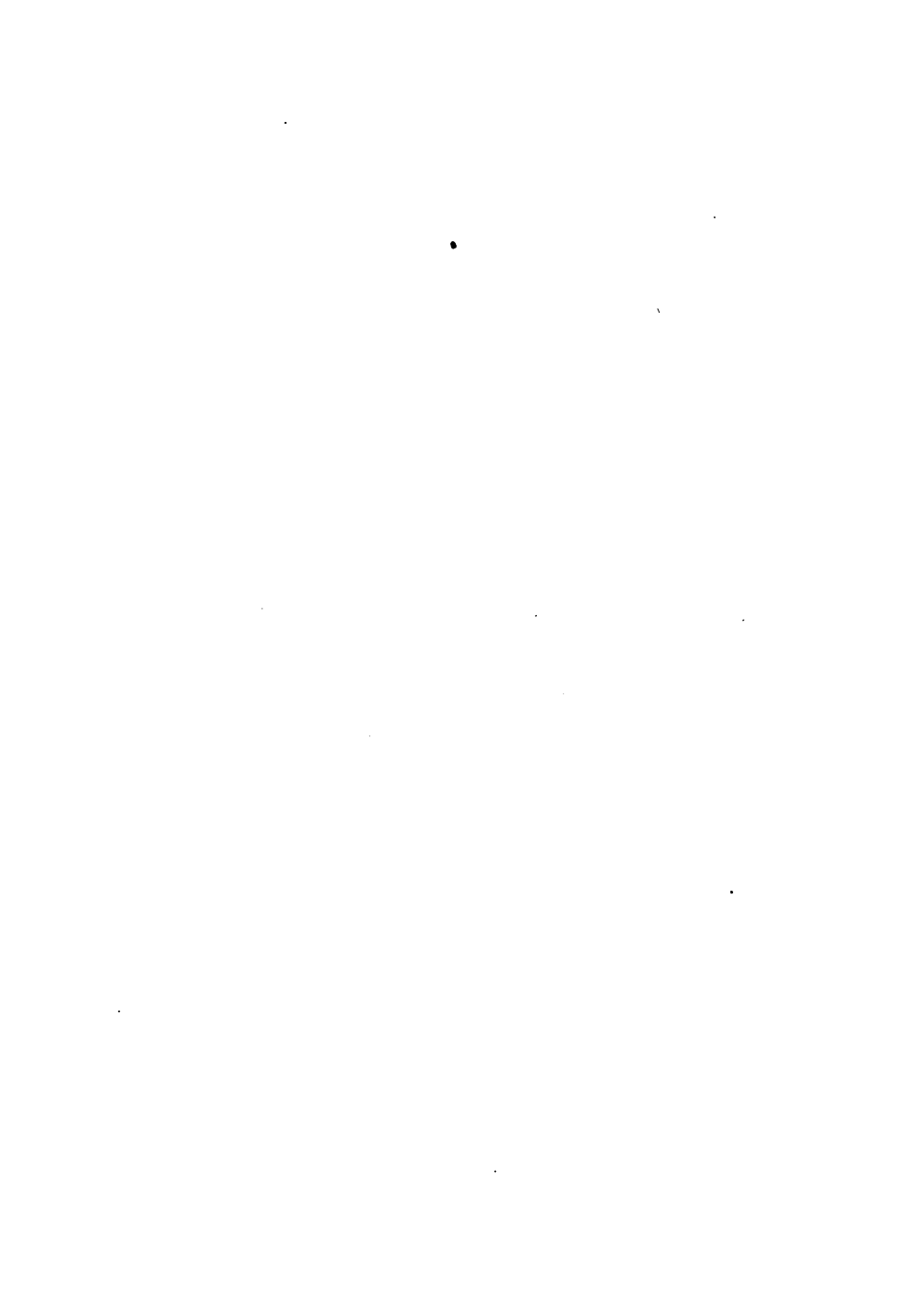


# Beneke Brothers,



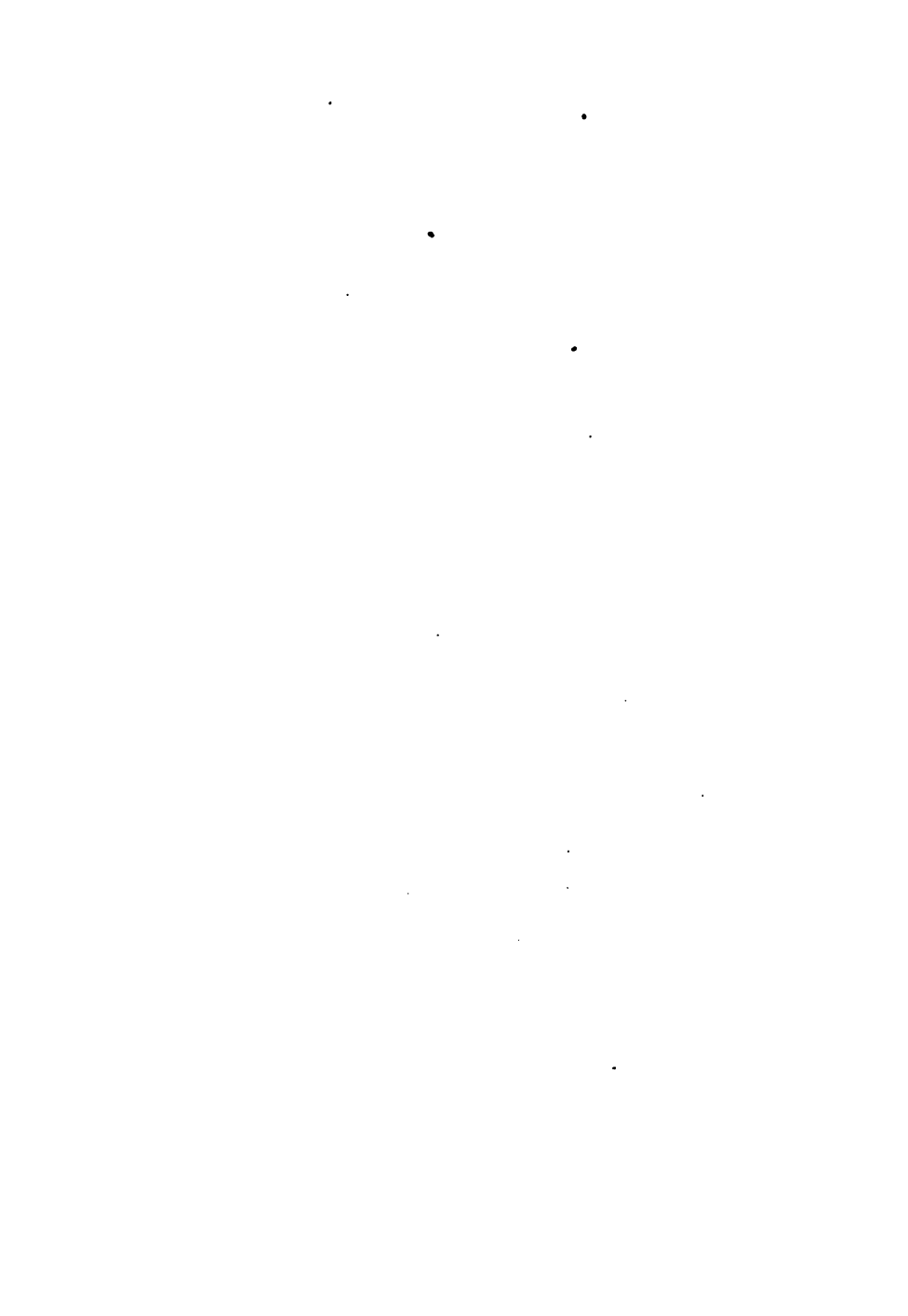
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*The Beneke*  
TRADE MARK. *Shoes*  
IS STRICTLY HAND-MADE













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